

Message Text

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QUOTE: S E C R E T JERUSALEM 0221

EXDIS DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, XF, US
SUBJECT: COMMENTS ON U.S. STRATEGY IN PEACE NEGOTIATIONS

FOR SAUNDERS FROM ATHERTON

REF: STATE 18303

U.S. DEL, NO. 11

1. APPRECIATE STATUS REPORT WHICH YOU HAVE SENT TO US ON THE
STRATEGY PAPER WHICH DEPARTMENT IS PREPARING. WE
WOULD LIKE TO HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON IT

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WHEN YOU CAN SEND IT TO US. IN THE MEANTIME, I
THOUGHT I WOULD TRY TO GET TO YOU BY OPENING OF
BUSINESS TODAY OUR COMMENTS ON A FEW SELECTED
ASPECTS OF SITUATION WHICH WE BELIEVE ARE OF
IMPORTANCE, WHILE RECOGNIZING THEY MAY ALREADY HAVE
OCCURED TO YOU.

2. FIRST POINT IS PROBLEM WE HAVE IN PURSUING THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES. I BELIEVE WE NEED TO LOOK CLOSELY AT RELATIONSHIP OF WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE IN THIS EXERCISE WITH OUR LONGER-RANGE OBJECTIVES. OUR MEETING WITH DAYAN YESTERDAY HIGHLIGHTED DIFFICULTY WE ARE GOING TO HAVE IN REACHING AGREED LANGUAGE ON PARAGRAPH 5. EVEN IN ALTERNATIVE (B), WHICH ISRAELIS MADE CLEAR THEY ARE FAR FROM AGREEING TO AS IT PRESENTLY STANDS, THEY HAVE BEGUN TO WHITTLE AWAY OUR ASWAN FORMULATION. THEY ARE NOW PREDICTABLY ASSUMING THAT OUR FUTURE EFFORTS, RATHER THAN HOLDING THE LINE ON A WEEKEND VERSION OF THE ASWAN LANGUAGE AS REPRESENTED BY (B), WILL BE DIRECTED TOWARD SPLITTING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEIR (A) AND (B) WHICH THE EGYPTIANS HAVE AGREED TO.

3. THESE ARE TWO QUESTIONS WE MUST ASK IF THIS IS THE KIND OF RESULT WE CAN EXPECT. THE FIRST IS WHETHER WE STAND EVEN AN OUTSIDE CHANCE OF GETTING SADAT TO AGREE TO FUTURE SIGNIFICANT COMPROMISES ON THE KEY PHRASEOLOGY IN (B). I RECOGNIZE THAT ADDITION OF NEW PARAGRAPH 3 WILL HELP IF BEGIN IN THE END ACCEPTS "PALESTINIAN PROBLEM" FORMULATION, BUT THIS WILL BE OFFSET TO THE EXTENT THAT PARAGRAPH 5 MAKES
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EXPLICIT THAT ALL OF PALESTINIANS EXCEPT THOSE RESIDING IN WEST BANK/GAZA ARE EXCLUDED FROM PARTICIPATION IN DETERMINING THEIR OWN FUTURE. EVEN IF SADAT COULD BE BROUGHT TO ACCEPT SIGNIFICANT COMPROMISE ON (B), WE MUST ASK WHETHER DOING SO WOULD NOT DEEPEN HIS PRESENT SENSE OF GLOOM AND DISILLUSIONMENT. HERMANN EILTS' ANALYSIS (CAIRO 2558) OF SADAT'S CURRENT MOOD, AND THE REASONS FOR IT, STRIKES ME AS RIGHT ON THE MARK. I BELIEVE HERMANN IS RIGHT IN ASCRIBING SADAT'S UNHAPPINESS NOT MERELY TO THE TOUGH STAND ISRAEL HAS TAKEN ON THE NEGOTIATING ISSUES BUT ALSO, AS SADAT SEES IT, ON U.S. RELUCTANCE TO STAND BY POSITIONS WE OURSELVES HAVE ESPOUSED IN THE FACE OF RESISTANCE FROM ISRAEL. WE WILL CERTAINLY FEEL THIS WAY ABOUT THE ASWAN FORMULATION WHICH EVEN IN ITS ORIGINAL FORM HE RECOGNIZES WAS A CAREFUL ATTEMPT TO BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES.

4. THE SECOND QUESTION IS WHETHER A DECLARATION WITH A PARAGRAPH 5 THAT IS WEAKENED FURTHER IN THE DIRECTION OF THE PREFERRED ISRAELI VERSION (A)

WILL ACHIEVE ANYTHING FOR US IN TERMS OF IMPROVING PROSPECTS FOR US IN TERMS OF IMPROVING PROSPECTS FOR FUTURE STAGES OF NEGOTIATIONS. IT WILL BE DIFFICULT ENOUGH GETTING HUSSEIN TO AGREE TO JOIN THE NEGOTIATIONS ON THE BASIS OF NEW PARAGRAPH 3 PLUS (B) AS IT NOW STANDS; IT WILL BE WELL-NIGH IMPOSSIBLE, IN MY JUDGMENT , ON THE BASIS OF LANGUAGE RESEMBLING (A). MOREOVER, A DECLARATION WITH SUCH COMPROMISE LANGUAGE IN IT ON THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE WOULD BE RECEIVED BY WORLD OPINION AS AN ANTI-CLIMAX, AND I BELIEVE WE MUST BE SERIOUSLY CONCERNED AT THE ENFEEBLING EFFECT IT IS LIKELY TO HAVE ON OVERALL MOMENTUM IN THE PEACE PROCESS.

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5. I AM LEFT WITH THE QUESTION THEREFORE, WHICH I THINK WE MUST EXAMINE VERY CAREFULLY, WHETHER, IN FULL REALIZATION OF THE DIFFICULTIES WE WOULD FACE WITH ISRAEL, WE ARE NOT BETTER SERVED TO HOLD THE LINE ON (B) AS IT IS PRESENTLY WORDED, TAKING THE POSITION THAT IT IS, IN OUR JUDGMENT, THE ABSOLUTE MINIMUM NEEDED TO MOVE THINGS FORWARD TO A FURTHER STAGE OF NEGOTIATIONS. THERIS NO QUESTION THAT SUCH A STAND WILL PRODUCE A MINI-CRISIS WITH ISRAEL. BUT IT WOULD RESTORE SADAT'S CONFIDENCE THAT WHEN THE CHIPS ARE DOWN THE U.S. IS PREPARED TO STAND BY POSITIONS IT HAS TAKEN. THAT FACT ALSO, IN ITSELF, COULD WELL CHANGE HUSSEIN'S SKEPTICAL MOOD ABOUT THE NEGOTIATIONS. EVEN IN ISRAEL, ALTHOUGH WE WOULD HAVE SOME TOUGH SLEDDING FOR AWHILE, THE END RESULT COULD BE BENEFICIAL. DAYAN YESTERDAY SEEMED ALMOST TO BE PLEADING FOR THE U.S. TO TAKE A STAND; IT SEEMS CLEAR HE SEES THIS AS ESSENTIAL TO STRENGTHENING HIS OWN HAND IN TRYING TO PERSUADE BEGIN TO BE MORE FLEXIBLE ON CERTAIN KEY ISSUES.

6. IN TERMS OF HOW WE MIGHT PROCEED, I SUGGEST THAT BEFORE COMING TO FINAL DECISION ON THIS QUESTION, WE SHOULD TEST THE WATERS IN CAIRO. IT IS POSSIBLE SADAT MIGHT BE WILLING TO ACCEPT MUCH OF WHAT ISRAEL WANTS IN PARAGRAPH 5, AND OBVIOUSLY IF HE DOES WE SHOULD NOT FIGHT THE PROBLEM. MY COMMENTS ABOVE ARE DIRECTED AT THE POSSIBILITY OF A PROLONGED WRANGLE OVER PARAGRAPH 5 WITH THE PROSPECT THAT, IN THE END, WE WILL HAVE A VERY MEAGER RESULT.

7. THE SECOND POINT I WOULD RAISE TODAY IS TO MAKE THE OBSERVATION -- ONE THAT HAS UNDOUBTEDLY ALSO STRUCK
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ALL OF YOU IN THE DEPARTMENT -- THAT IN PROJECTING THE MODALITIES FOR NEGOTIATIONS IN THE WEEKS AHEAD, WE FACE A DIFFICULT PROBLEM IN THE LACK OF SYMMETRY BETWEEN THE ISRAELI AND EGYPTIAN NEGOTIATING TEAMS. THERE IS NO DAYAN -- A FIGURE CONFIDENT ENOUGH TO ENGAGE IN EXPLORATORY DISCUSSIONS ON AN AD REFERENDUM BASIS AND WHO IS THEN CONFIDENT ENOUGH TO ARGUE THEM WITH HIS PRIME MINISTER -- ON THE EGYPTIAN SIDE. THIS MEANS WE HAVE TO GIVE CAREFUL ATTENTION TO SUCH QUESTIONS AS VENUE AND EASE OF CONSULTATIONS IN MAKING OUR OWN SUGGESTIONS FOR THE BEST FORMAT FOR ON-GOING NEGOTIATIONS. I AM BEGINNING TO THINK THERE IS A GOOD DEAL TO BE SAID FOR DAYAN'S SUGGESTION THAT THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE, WHEN IT RECONVENES, MEET IN SOME NEUTRAL SPOT IN SINAI, PERHAPS AT THE U.S. SINAI FIELD MISSION HEADQUARTERS. THERE WOULD BE LOGISTICAL PROBLEMS, BUT THERE WOULD BE SOME STRONG ADVANTAGES. BOTH NEGOTIATING TEAMS COULD REPAIR EACH EVENING TO THEIR RESPECTIVE CAPITALS TO CONSULT WITH THEIR POLITICAL LEADERSHIP. ALSO, THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS, IF ADMITTED AT ALL, COULD BE CAREFULLY CONTROLLED WHICH COULD HELP TO REDUCE THE "DIPLOMACY BY PUBLIC STATEMENT" ATMOSPHERE THAT HAS CHARACTERIZED THE TALKS THUS FAR.

8. THIRD, THERE IS THE SETTLEMENTS QUESTION AS IT IS LIKELY TO AFFECT THE BROADER NEGOTIATING ATMOSPHERE. WE HAVE RECOMMENDED TO BOTH SIDES THAT THEY DEFER DISCUSSION OF THIS WHEN THE MILITARY COMMITTEE TALKS RESUME. BUT I WONDER WHETHER THIS IS REALISTIC IN VIEW OF THE CENTRAL PLACE IT HAS COME TO ASSUME IN SADAT'S MIND. EVEN UNSPOKEN, IT IS LIKELY TO CAST A SHADOW OVER THE BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS WHICH CANNOT HELP BUT EXTEND ALSO TO THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS. THIS RAISES THE QUESTION OF WHETHER IT WOULD NOT BE BETTER FOR US TO BE PUTTING FORWARD A
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PROPOSAL OF OUR OWN AT THIS POINT AS THE BEST WAY TO BEGIN TO DISPOSE OF THE PROBLEM, EVEN THOUGH IT WOULD OBVIOUSLY CAUSE PROBLEMS FOR US WITH THE ISRAELIS. A REASONABLE FORMULA MIGHT BE CONSTRUCTED AROUND THE PROPOSITION THAT ISRAELI CIVILIAN SETTLERS WOULD BE ALLOWED TO STAY WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE RESTORATION OF EGYPTIAN SOVEREIGNTY OVER ALL OF SINAI, AND WITHOUT

ANY EXTRA-TERRITORIAL ARRANGEMENTS (SINCE THE SETTLEMENTS WOULD BE IN THE DEMILITARIZED ZONE OF ANY LIKELY PACE AGREEMENT THEY WOULD PRESUMABLY BE PATROLLED BY AND UNDER THE PROTECTION OF UN FORCES). THIS COULD BE A FACE-SAVING WAY OUT FOR BEGIN, A I BELIEVE, ONCE TEMPER COOLED DOWN, IT MIGHT ALSO BE ACCEPTABLE TO SADAT. THE PRACTICAL EFFECT OF SUCH A PLAN WOULD IN ANY CASE BE THAT OVER TIME MOST ISRAELI SETTLERS WOULD NOT CHOOSE TO SAY ON IN THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES.

9. WITH RESPECT TO FIRST POINT IN THIS TELEGRAM, WE HAVE JUST HEARD FROM EVRON THAT HE AND BARAK WISH TO SEE US THIS AFTERNOON TO DISCUSS SOME NEW LANGUAGE THEY HAVE DEVELOPED FOR PARAGRAPH 5 OF THE DECLARATION. WE WILL SEE WHAT THEY COME UP WITH AND WILL PERHAPS HAVE SOME FURTHER COMMENT ON THIS SUBJECT IN THE LIGHT OF OUR SESSION WITH THEM AS WELL AS THE STRATEGY PAPER YOU WILL BE SENDING TO US.

10. I HAVE JUST SEEN EILTS' MESSAGE REPOTING THAT SADAT IS SENDING DELEGATIONS TO EUROPE AND U.S. TO EXPLAIN EGYPT'S POSITION. WITH MUBARAK, KAMEL, GHALI AND ABDEL MEGUID OUT OF THE COUNTRY, THIS RAISES THE QUESTION OF WHOM I WOULD MEET WITH IN CAIRO IF WE GET GREEN LIGHT IN NEXT DAY OR SO FROM
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SADAT TO PROCEED WITH WORK ON DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES. THERE ARE ALWAYS AL-BAZ AND FOREIGN MINISTRY LAWYERS, BUT THAT PROSPECT DOES NOT FILL ME WITH HOPE. WOULD APPRECIATE EILTS' COMMENT ON THIS POINT. NEWLIN UNQUOTE
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